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The Effects on Children Living in a Single Parent Household

“One in four children is born to an unmarried mother, many of whom are teenagers.” (Kirby 2012). This statistic showed up when in 1970, the number of single-parent families with children under the age of 18 was 3.8 million then doubled to 9.7 million in 1990. Since then there has been a lot of research done on child living in single parent homes and how it affects their lives. Even though most of the time when a child is being raised in a single household, he or she cannot help it, the child is greatly affected by the way he or she is raised. The child needs a two parent household in order to be properly raised. If the child is not raised in a good family structure, it can begin to affect the child physiologically. Now how it effects the child depends on if the child is male or female and whether the child is raised in a single father or single mothers home.

Mark Mather’s talks about how the number of children living in single-mother families has greatly risen over the past four decades, causing a lot of concern among the public. According to Mathers, researchers have identified the rise in single-parent families, mostly in single mother families, as a major factor for the increase in child poverty in the United States. Some of the effects of living in single-parent households have been shown to go way past the financial side of things. One those are increasing the risk of children dropping out of school, quitting work, and becoming teen parents. Even though many children growing up in single-parent households succeed, others will face major challenges in trying to make the transition to adulthood.

Matthew D. Bramlett and Stephen J. Blumberg say that “Family structure can have a profound impact on children’s experiences and life trajectories.” (2012). They both go on to say that if there is structure in the single parent household that there will be a better chance that the kid will do better in school and later on at work. Jeff Cookston goes on to talk about how parental supervision and family structure has an effect on adolescent behaviors. How it deals with alcohol and drugs problems or to just misbehaving at home. Results indicate that supervision was lowest for single-father homes; slightly higher in single-mother homes; and was highest in families that were still together. Results also indicated that alcohol and drug behaviors, as well as Criminal behavior rates, were highest in single-father homes. Between supervision levels and the sex of the participant, indicated that for adolescent females low and medium levels of supervision serve to protect the adolescent female from problem behavior; while males showed higher levels of problem behaviors in both medium and low supervision groups.

In Stephany Elsworth’s article “*The Negative Effects of Single-Parent Homes on Children.”* She talks about single parenting and the financial struggles that are often associated with raising a child alone and how it can have negative effects on children, particularly when it comes to success in the classroom. She indicates that children from single-parent households often have more difficulty performing in school and may achieve at lower levels than their counterparts from two-parent households. Along with Elsworth, author John Kelly, talks about a major study in Sweden looked at the health records of nearly a million young people and found that children living in single-parent families had twice the incidence of psychiatric illness, suicide attempts, and alcohol abuse problems compared to children from two-parent homes. He goes on to say that in other studies, kids living with single parents have lower self-esteem. Author John Kelly goes on to say that divorce is a common reason why a parents end up single. It's not unusual for children to be exposed to or even drawn into the conflict that happens between parents before, during, and after a breakup. Parents may even end up pressuring their children to choose sides, which can leave children feeling guilty or abandoned.

Parents always want to do what is best for their child. But, sometimes circumstances dictate the decisions that may or may not bring out the best results for their children, like divorce and single parenting. Parents always want to do what is best for their children. Unfortunately, sometimes circumstances dictate decisions that may or may not bring about the best results for their child. But it is important so look at every perspective. Pamela Rivers, talks about how living in a single parent home can affect boys. She goes on to say that “Immediately after divorce (or other removal of a parent) children, especially boys, tend to have a higher rate of anti-social behavior.” (2012). Also she talks about how boys will tend to act out more at school, be more aggressive around other children, and be less focused on their studies. And that boy’s will be more likely to mess around with drugs or alcohol to deal with the pain. Now on the other hand, Linda Byrne, author of the article “*Girls in single-parent families at greater risk of obesity”* that, “girls in single-parent families are at a higher risk of being overweight or obese than children in dual-parent families.” (2011). Her research shows that girls in single-parent households tend to eat fewer servings of fruits and vegetables, and eat more foods high in fat and sugar, and spend an extra two hours a week watching television.

Single parents are still on the rise and don’t see the trend decreasing anytime soon. Many children are affected by this rise and have caused many of them a lot of pain. We should be there to help these single parents along with their children in the time of need. As adults in this world, children look up to us. We need to show them that families need to stick together and try to work things out for the benefit of the parent and also the children. There needs to be a lot less children out there hurting in today’s world. So stick together as a family, that way we can give the children a better life.

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